

By now you should have a pretty good idea of how to use Zip and Unzip. We have covered using the command line programs along with a couple of front ends such as Archivers Control Panel and Unzip Librarian. In this issue I will cover a program which is unashamedly mine, Zip Manager.

After using Archivers Control Panel for some time, I realised that the overwhelming majority of archives in the QL scene used Zip. Plus there were one or two extra things I wanted such as the ability to use Window Manager 2 colours, display resize and so on, so I wrote a program purely as a front end for Zip and Unzip to use on a modern GD2 and WMAN 2 system. I wanted it to be a bit easier to set up and use as well as being pointer driven like most modern QL software.

Explanations:

GD2: Abbreviation for Graphics Device Interface 2, the system used to display the enhanced colours on systems such as Aurora, QPC2, QXL and Q40/Q60.

WMAN2: Window Manager 2, the system used to provide standard windows, borders, colour themes etc on a system which already has GD2.

Zip Manager will only run on a system which has Window Manager 2. In practice, this means that you must have either:

- SMSQ/E version 3.00 or later, or
- QDOS with pointer environment version 2.00 or later.

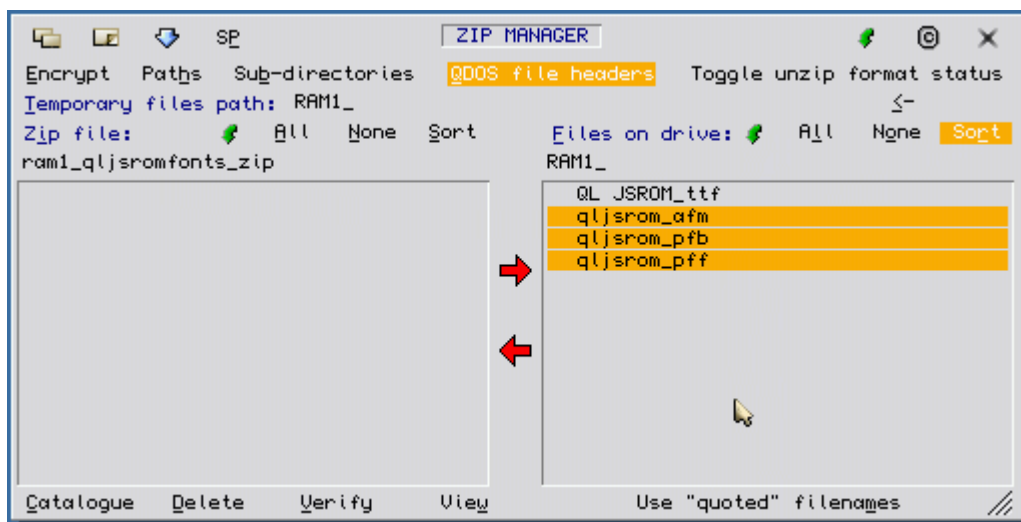


Figure 1 – Zip Manager

The basic layout of Zip Manager is broadly similar in principle to that of Archivers Control Panel. It has two main windows, one showing the content of a zip file (left hand window, blank in Figure 1), the other showing the content of a drive/directory holding files to be zipped or files which have been extracted from a zip file. Adding files to the zip file is as easy as highlighting them (click on the filename) in the right hand window, then click on the left facing red arrow in the middle. Extracting a file from the zip file is as easy as highlighting the files to be extracted in the left hand window (the zip file) and then clicking on the right facing red arrow in the centre of the display.

Setting It All Up

The Zip Manager program has a level 1 config block, which means you can set the defaults for the program using the good old Config program supplied with so many pointer driven programs.

You can see that there are a few loose items dotted around the display – Encrypt, Paths, Sub-directories, Toggle unzip format status, Use “quoted” filenames and so on. The default settings you see when the program starts can be set using Config.

Exec the Config program, and tell it to configure the program file called ZipMan_obj. There are 19 items you can set in all, as listed in page 1 and 2 of the manual. It might take you a little while to establish settings which you prefer and this is something that using the program over time will help you determine which settings are best for you.

The two most important settings which have to be gotten right are items 10 and 11. These tell Zip Manager where you have stored the Zip and Unzip program. Zip Manager cannot work without these two programs!

The next most important setting is number 4. This is the name of the drive which will hold zip's temporary files. As long as your system has a ramdisk (most do these days) this will usually be ram1_, or you will have to specify another drive with plenty of space if your system really does not have a ramdisk. One point to note: if your system has a static ramdisk, the type whose size is fixed by a FORMAT command, you will need to ensure it has plenty of space otherwise the zip programs might get “strangled” by not having enough space to work in.

Using Zip Manager

The icons across the top are pretty standard QL program icons. The first (the Move icon) lets you move the Zip Manager program around the screen. The second is a Resize icon, which lets you enlarge or reduce the program's display within reason. The third, which might appear as a blue down arrow or 'Zzz' logo depending on the system it's used on, puts the program to sleep in the QPAC2 button frame if that is present. The SP icon (System Palette) selects one of four possible colour themes on a WMAN2 system. Clicking on it cycles round the next system palette number, then when it's gone past the fourth goes back to the first. If you are in the habit of using 'colour themes' to give your programs a standardised appearance (e.g. I use a grey theme for my programs) e.g. by using Wolfgang Uhlig's Q-Coco program, Zip Manager will use these colour themes (also known as System Palettes). Hence the grey appearance of the program display shown in Figure 1 – which is of course easier to appreciate if you are reading this article in the electronic colour PDF version of the magazine – as I use a grey themed system palette on my system. If your system is not able to display high colours, it will display in the standard 4 colours if you are using a MODE 4 system.

The fifth icon (on the right, at the top) refreshes the program display, which might be handy if some other program has managed to corrupt it. The © icon displays a brief copyright screen and the 'X' icon lets you quit from the program.

Below these are a number of loose items with rather cryptic names in some cases:

ENCRYPT – lets you add a password to a zip file. This means nobody can open the zip file to extract the files unless they know the password (or they are very talented and determined hackers!).

PATHS – Specifies if the full path name or just the pure filename is stored in the zip file. Suppose that we are zipping a series of Quill _doc files from a directory called win1_quill_. If we want the zip file to remember that they came from win1_quill_ so that they can later be unzipped to the same place, we highlight this. So WIN1_QUILL_myfile_doc would be stored as that, otherwise it would just be stored as myfile_doc. This might be useful for programs which expect their files to be stored in a particular directory. On the other hand, Xchange Quill files can be loaded from pretty well anywhere, so this can be left unset.

SUB_DIRECTORIES – Zip can archive files in the current directory and optionally from any sub-directories contained within the current directory automatically if this is set. If not highlighted, this item means that zipping will only process files in the current directory and NOT any further sub-directories contained in the current directory.

QDOS FILE HEADERS – this must be highlighted if the file contains QL executable programs, or the file headers will be lost if this is not highlighted. When not highlighted, it will generate a PC-style zip file without any QL headers. I rarely use this myself, but it might come in useful if the Unzip program on the target computer does not understand QL file headers, for example.

TOGGLE UNZIP FORMAT STATUS – Whether or not the ‘_’ and ‘.’ in filenames are converted. Most files stored on a PC into a zip file will have filenames ending with a suffix starting with ‘.’, e.g. file.txt. Normally, you might expect QL unzip to automatically convert this to file_txt but if it is important that ‘.’ and ‘_’ are not swapped, you can use this option to prevent that.

TEMPORARY FILES PATH – normally RAM1_ as mentioned above, but can be changed temporarily with this option if required.

<- Move one step back up the directory name path, e.g. from win1_quill_docs_ back to win1_quill_

Both the left and right main windows have icons for Refresh, All, None and Sort. Refresh redraws the filenames list for that window. ALL selects (highlights) all filenames in that window, NONE deselects them all, and SORT obviously lists them into alphabetical order.

Below these are the main drive and zipfile selections boxes. Left clicking on a box (HIT - move the pointer over the box, then click on the left hand mouse button or press the SPACE bar) lets you type something into the box, whereas right clicking (DO – move the pointer over the box and press the right hand mouse button, or press ENTER) brings up a file selection menu common to most of my programs.

USE “QUOTED” FILENAMES – Sometimes when using Zip, filenames containing some characters such as spaces can be problematical. Example: QL JS ROM_pff would cause a problem as Zip would try to zip these as three separate files called “QL”, “JS” and “ROM_pff” which of course would fail. By putting quotes around the filename containing such awkward characters, it forces it to see what is between the quotes as a single filename “QL JS ROM_pff”, although this is obviously bad practice. Some older programs put spaces in filenames, so this can be used to work around such a limitation.

Under the left hand window there are 4 commands which act on a zip file:

CATALOGUE – displays a more detailed listing of file details of selected files – lists file size, compression method and ratio, date and time.

DELETE – selected files are deleted from the archive. Use with caution – deleted files cannot be recovered.

VERIFY – A quick check on the archive , with errors in selected files detailed on the screen.

VIEW – this lets you view a file contained within the archive. Three viewing methods are available:

1. Zip's own internal viewer, which displays 22 lines of text irrespective of program window height. You press space bar or enter to move on to the next 22 lines, or q to quit.
2. Associated editor. Within the config system you can specify which program to use to view files (item 12 when configuring). Usually this will be an editor program which can display both text and binary files (Ralf Rekoendt's S_Edit program makes a good choice for this).
3. FileInfo II – this will feed the file to FileInfo II if you use this, so the file can be viewed using the associated program if set up within FileInfo II (e.g. Xchange to view Quill _doc files or Abacus _aba files).

I hope you'll find that Zip Manager is a nice, simple and convenient program to use once you have set it up on your computer. You can download it from: <http://dilwyn.me.uk/arch/index.html> and you can get Zip and Unzip programs from the same page, or direct from Jonathan Hudson's website at <http://www.daria.co.uk/qdos/>

That theoretically concludes this series of articles about Zip and Unzip and the various "front end" programs, but if you the readers feel there is anything I haven't adequately covered, or missed out altogether, please do get in touch and I'll see what I can do if a future supplementary article is required.